U.S. Department of Education
2010 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Type of School: (Check all that apply) [] Charter [] Title I [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal: Mr. Michael Duffy

Official School Name: Byron High School

School Mailing Address:
1887 Second Ave. NW
Byron, MN 55920-1308

County: Olmsted State School Code Number*: 0531-01

Telephone: (507) 775-2301 Fax: (507) 775-2303

Web site/URL: www.bears.byron.k12.mn.us E-mail: michael.duffy@byron.k12.mn.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Wendy Shannon

District Name: Byron # 531 Tel: (507) 775-2383

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Matthew Prigge

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*
The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2009-2010 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2004.

6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.

7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: (per district designation)

1	Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1	Middle/Junior high schools
1	High schools
0	K-12 schools
3	**TOTAL**

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 7594

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

[ ] Urban or large central city
[ ] Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
[ ] Suburban
[X] Small city or town in a rural area
[ ] Rural

4. 10 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK			0	**6**			0
K			0	**7**			0
1			0	**8**			0
2			0	**9**	67	66	133
3			0	**10**	70	67	137
4			0	**11**	58	56	114
5			0	**12**	53	58	111
		TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL					495

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0	% American Indian or Alaska Native
1	% Asian
0	% Black or African American
2	% Hispanic or Latino
0	% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
97	% White
	% Two or more races
100	**% Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 6 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	6
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	22
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	28
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	497
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.056
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	5.634

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 0 %

Total number limited English proficient 0

Number of languages represented: 0

Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8 %

Total number students who qualify: 41

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 7 %

Total Number of Students Served: 36

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

5	Autism	0	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	2	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	13	Specific Learning Disability
5	Emotional Disturbance	3	Speech or Language Impairment
0	Hearing Impairment	1	Traumatic Brain Injury
7	Mental Retardation	0	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0	Multiple Disabilities	0	Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	Full-Time	**Part-Time**
Administrator(s)	1	0
Classroom teachers	28	4
Special resource teachers/specialists	3	1
Paraprofessionals	5	1
Support staff	10	4
Total number	47	10

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 **19 :1**

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	98%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	96%	97%	97%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	8%	13%	8%	12%	14%
Student dropout rate	1%	6%	5%	4%	3%

Please provide all explanations below.

Teacher turnover rate in the 2007-2008 school year is the result of one teacher moving to an administrative position in another school, one retirement of a long-term teacher, one teacher who moved out of state and one part-time teacher who left to accept a full-time position. Due to budget cuts, one teacher was reduced from full-time to 1/3 time. 4.66 FTE (full-time equivalent) of our 36 left during the 2007-2008 school year (13%).

Teacher turnover rate in the 2004-2005 school year reflects extensive retirements of long-term teachers that year.

The student drop-out rate in the 2007-2008 school year reached 6% as a result of a few students who left our school to complete their high school work in a local alternative learning center (ALC). Once there, about 50% completed the required credits to earn a diploma from Byron High School, but 50% did not complete the work in time. Of the 50% who did not complete the work on time, most have completed their program as of this date. They either stayed at our ALC or moved into a neighboring or adult diploma program.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

Graduating class size	105	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	53	%
Enrolled in a community college	25	%
Enrolled in vocational training	10	%
Found employment	10	%
Military service	2	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	0	%
Total	**100**	%

PART III - SUMMARY

Byron, Minnesota is a small community eight miles west of the urban area of Rochester, MN. Our community is primarily a bedroom community for professionals. Our students and parents support and value education in general and our school system in particular. The community is proud of their schools, the accomplishments of their students, and they hold both to high standards.

Through the leadership of our superintendent and school board, we are using Continuous Improvement (CI) techniques to promote systematic improvements. The district vision statement of *"Maximizing Learning Opportunities for All"* is commonly referenced and used as a guidepost when we make decisions.

The combination of using our district vision statement and the tools provided by CI has propelled our school forward. In 2004 the community passed additional taxes to provide wireless laptop computers to all teachers. In 2007 the district instituted the hiring of a "data coach" at each of the three schools. These coaches were responsible for disseminating the various data we had available to us and getting that information in a useful, understandable form to our teachers. The district had provided us with an opportunity for improvement.

In the first year (2007-2008) of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), the high school staff looked at our systems and searched for ways to optimize our daily structure. We looked at ways to motivate and reward students and ways to "close the gap" between our high achievers and struggling students. From this study, we instituted an updated student recognition program called STAR (**S**cholarly + **T**ime in class + positive **A**ttitude & behavior = **R**esults). We added a number of after school and weekend review classes for ACT test preparation. We also developed a first level intervention for students who were not completing their work outside of class. Students who had work missing were assigned to a mandatory daily Guided Study Hall (GSH) during their lunch period. They were required to remain in GSH until they were caught up.

The third major action that came from those first years of PLCs was the addition of our Seminar program. This program started as a four week intervention to help students review for the state-mandated tests. Our school uses a 4X4 block scheduling system. In that system, students are encouraged to accelerate in areas of interest or ability. Some students may not be in an English class or in a math class during the semesters when the state tests are given. The seminar program was designed to not only review the material, but also to demonstrate to our students that we support and value the tests. We made clear to students our expectations of excellence. These interventions have helped our students show improvement on our state-mandated tests, the ACT test, and a reduction in failing grades given.

This year we have continued these interventions, and we have made improvements to each of them. Our homework intervention has been expanded to include not only students who do not complete their work outside of class, but to include students who score below a given percentile. The time committed to homework intervention (GSH) by students and staff has increased. The Seminar program has expanded to a weekly intervention, and the STAR program has been expanded to include students whose efforts show improvement.

The vision for Byron High School has taken on a distinct focus. It has been revised from the district's vision statement of *"Maximizing Learning Opportunities for All."* We have dropped the word, "opportunities" from our vision. Our focus is now ***"Maximizing Learning for All."*** This statement highlights our building's grasp of the bottom line: learning. We can do this because our district and community is focused on providing the opportunities. We in turn can be results oriented. They provide the opportunities, and we provide the documented, data-driven results. We have decided that we will not stand by and watch students move towards poor academic performance. We ***will*** intervene.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:**

Byron High School is proud of the significant academic achievement noted in the past as noted here.

The 2004-2005 test scores reflects MCA I (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment - statewide assessment) test data. The state implemented new standards and testing called MCA II for the 2005-2006 school year including the 10th grade reading assessment and 11th grade math assessment. As a result, the content, rigor and scoring of the exams changed significantly. Schools across Minnesota saw a significant drop in scores from 2004-2005 to 2005-2006. Due to the change, the results prior to 2005-2006 cannot be directly compared; however, since that time, BHS students have shown a consistent and steady improvement in MCA II scores.

Scores falls into one of four achievement levels: *Does Not Meet Standards, Partially Meets Standards, Meets Standards*, and *Exceeds Standards*. Students who are in the *Meets Standards* range are considered "proficient." Students who are in the *Exceeds Standards range* are considered "advanced." Overall, BHS 10th grade reading scores have improved from 68% of the students at a proficient and advanced level to 92% of the students at a proficient and advanced level (meets or exceeds at the state level). The state average 10th grade reading score for the same period of time fluctuated from a low of 66% to a high of 74%.

BHS 11th grade math scores show an improvement from 30% overall proficient and advanced level to 60% proficient and advanced level. The state average 11th grade math score range for the same period of time fluctuated from a low of 30% to a high of 42%. General information can be found at the MN Department of Education website: http://education.state.mn.us/mde/Accountability_Programs/Assessment_and_Testing/Assessments/MCA/index.html and BHS specific information can be found at http://education.state.mn.us/ReportCard2005/schoolDistrictInfo.do?SCHOOL_NUM=020&DISTRICT_NUM=0531&DISTRICT_TYPE=01. BHS 9th grade writing scores have also had a very strong showing of 96% of students who took the state mandated Grad Writing test last year passed while the state average passing rate was 89%.

For many years the ACT scores earned by BHS students was stagnant, hovering around 21 - 21.9 composite. Since BHS embarked on the journey to improve student outcomes, ACT scores earned by BHS students have also shown significant gains since 2005 when the BHS average composite score was 21.7, the state average was 22.3, and the national average was 20.9. Since that time, BHS average ACT composite scores have risen to 23.9 while the state average composite score was 22.7, and the national average was 21.1 for the 2009 graduating class.

This journey has taken many years of examining data, setting goals and objectives, implementing several different interventions, and tweaking those interventions over time. Focus is on inclusion and aggregation of all courses and departments in reaching joint academic goals and instructional improvement. BHS plans to continue the ambitious journey to increase the percentage of students who reach and exceed proficiency levels on the state MCA tests, ACT scores, and graduation rates.

2. **Using Assessment Results:**

Byron School District, as a whole, has set high standards of achievement for all students K-12. Each level has worked hard using data to improve overall instruction, as well as individual student instruction. Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) math and reading testing is completed for each student annually and results

are available for use within two weeks. All certified staff were trained and have access to assigned student test results. NWEA RIT (Rasch Unit) scores are used to determine if a student needs remedial work, and their schedule is balanced according to academic workload. Individual lexile scores are used to adjust teaching material/style to differentiate instruction.

School staff accepted the challenge of developing and implementing a data study program headed by data coaches in the building. Data coaches are responsible for disaggregating the bulk data into usable, relevant strands. Overall instruction is improved by reviewing results from the NWEA strands by grade level to tease out areas of overall strength and weakness, which may guide general as well as student-specific instructional adjustment. Eighth grade students are given the EXPLORE assessment, and 10th grade students are given the PLAN assessment; both are produced/scored by ACT, and these results are reviewed and used much the same way by departments to identify areas of overall strength or weakness. Supports have been implemented via remedial classes based on test scores and academic performance. PLCs and district action plans have been developed, updated and improved annually which has allowed all staff members to collaborate and work towards student success.

Planning has included developing effective student interventions, strengthening teaching methodology, establishing essential learner outcomes, and increasing student opportunities. Plans require all instructors, including core and elective areas, to use data to work toward similar goals to improve student outcomes, particularly with teachers who teach the same course. Because BHS is on a block schedule, teachers often have a student for only one quarter, and in the past they often did not recognize the special needs of a student. Now with test assessments, guidance of the data coaches, and data online as well as 504 and IEP flags, students with limited academic success are less likely to be overlooked, and teachers can provide necessary interventions at the beginning of a term. The implementation of district-wide interventions has proven to benefit BHS student achievement.

3. **Communicating Assessment Results:**

BHS uses technology to aid in frequent and timely communication with both students and parents. Teachers put assignments and grades on the district and building web pages, which are accessible from the student data base with direct links to teacher emails. Parents, through the use of secure parent/student internet portals, have access to teacher contact information, assignments, future lesson plans, teacher grade books, transcripts, assessment results, and attendance. Quarterly parent/teacher conferences are held with voicemail and email reminders. MCA results, along with interpretive information, are mailed to each family. Families are also referred to the Minnesota Department of Education for further assistance. Resource information is sent to students who are struggling. Parents and students are encouraged to utilize results from their EXPLORE and PLAN assessments during evening parent/student meetings held to assure understanding and utilization of each student's results, to plan for the future, and improve academic performance. Further information is shared with 11th and 12th grade students and parents regarding ACT/SAT preparation, college registration, and financial aid.

ACT and MCA II scores are reported in the local and regional newspaper, television, and web-based outlets. Information is also reviewed by the school board, presented in faculty meetings, on the website, and in the school newsletter. Furthermore, satisfaction surveys are given to students, parents, and graduates to evaluate their perceptions and views of the educational services they receive. The results of these surveys are shared with school board, staff, and parents.

4. **Sharing Success:**

Collaboration is valued both within our district and outside our district. Many of our teachers, counselors, and our principal communicate our successes and experiences to other teachers and schools at local, regional, state, and national organizations and meetings. Our active membership in Rochester Area Math and Science

Partnership, the Zumbro Education District, and the Hiawatha Valley League promote consistent and continued sharing of resources, strategies, and teaching techniques. We intend to continue this interactive sharing with these organizations and all of southeast Minnesota as all shareholders within our school benefit from this process.

While our PLC groups continue to align coursework in order to best serve our students, we feel it is our responsibility to share with others: both our successes and areas that need improvement. As a small high school, we frequently have teachers who are the only teacher in their subject area in the building. To overcome this obstacle, teachers in these areas have expanded their network of colleagues to include teachers in other districts to discuss course content, delivery, and evaluation techniques. Examples of collaboration across district lines include the recently completed PLC generated PowerPoints that were presented to the entire high school faculty and has been made available online for other schools/teachers to view. Some of our training events such as Professional Growth Academy and On-line Learning are opened to other districts. Intervention strategies, including GSH and Seminar programs, have been shared with numerous school districts throughout southeast Minnesota. Several building teachers have implemented blended online coursework as they seek additional instructional delivery and learning methods.

It is our hope that this sharing and learning from others provides new opportunities, exciting endeavors, and challenging teaching methods for all.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Curriculum:**

We strive to ensure our students are college-ready and workforce-ready. We promote lifelong learning and enjoyment through a varied curriculum and unique classroom activities. The utilization of our schedule, the block system format, allows for vast instructional variation, a variety of electives that provide opportunities for students of all academic abilities and interests, differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, and active engagement of technology. This is infused across all disciplines, core subjects and electives areas. We are striving to instill online opportunities into our courses.

The language arts department, complete with a multitude of curricular options, strives to ensure an aptitude for either college or workforce readiness. Students are required to complete four years of language arts and courses range from remediation to Advanced Placement (AP) classes. A curriculum map that directly correlates with state standards and expectations is permeated into all areas of teaching and learning.

Social studies offers a comprehensive variety of classes, curricular options, and opportunities for students of all academic abilities. Students are required to complete three and a half years in this area. Student learning/engagement is achieved through a three-prong approach. The first is mapping of the state standards with our curriculum. The second is our Social Studies Essential Learner Outcomes. The third is teacher-directed connections to establish competence of current events and correlate to historical themes.

In science, students are able to select electives from life, physical, and environmental sciences. Each course is centered around developing problem-solving skills through hands-on and inquiry based learning experiences. This is accomplished by differentiated instruction and collaborative learning through labs and the use of technology. Classes are aligned with state and national learner outcomes in preparation for students' continued education. Three science credits are required for graduation.

Our mathematics department has worked to increase student engagement at all levels of student performance. The department currently engages struggling students through a self-paced computer based program called Accelerated Math, Guided Study Hall, and seminar labs. We have also created course offerings at the remedial level (Basic Algebra), through college prep level, and at the collegiate level with college credit available to meet the diverse abilities and needs of our students. Our department is also working to increase access and use of technology. Current technology tools being utilized include Moodle, Wikis, YouTube, voice threads, Smart Boards, author stream, and online chats/discussions. Our staff is working closely in professional learning communities to align curriculum to state standards, develop common assessments for consistent and quality instruction, and identify best practices in order to provide the best instruction possible. Three credits of math are required to graduate and students frequently complete additional credits.

The fine arts courses, including choral, instrumental music and visual arts, encourages students to use artistic processes to create, perform, analyze, interpret and evaluate art and music. We apply the national and state standards by engaging our students in singing, improvising, playing instruments and creating artwork. As part of our curriculum, we frequently seek community resources, guest artists and musicians. We strive to increase student awareness of diversity, historical references in the arts, and current trends in fine arts. Courses are designed to develop an appreciation of the fine arts in all students as well as provide an opportunity for students interested in pursuing a career in the field. One credit of fine arts is required for graduation.

The focal point of Spanish, levels one through four, is to develop the skill to communicate by listening, speaking, writing and reading in the target language. Students master grammatical structures and vocabulary related to topics such as time, weather, food, travel-directions, transportation, sports, school, shopping, animals, occupations, numbers, colors, health, family members, festivals, and celebrations etc. Opportunities are provided for students to compare and contrast cultures as they begin to learn about the customs of the Hispanic world. Advanced levels (Spanish 3 and 4) incorporate the study of cultural aspects of history, geography and literature in the language. Through sequential levels of practice, communication skills are developed. Spanish students expand their linguistic ability and are able to apply this language acquisition to life experiences beyond the classroom.

2b. **(Secondary Schools) English:**
(This question is for secondary schools only)

The Byron High School English curriculum transitions students from the middle school level into college and work force readiness. Required courses at the building expose students to a variety of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama, speech and communications. Elective courses continue to offer wide diversity through genre specific curriculum such as the following: sports literature, mystery, short stories, literary genres, and science fiction.

The department offers a curriculum that successfully addresses state standards and federal mandates. In an effort to address MCA II graduation requirements, the department has seamlessly embedded those benchmarks within each core class. For students who have not met pre-established NWEA RIT (Map test) scores, the MCA Reading Preparatory course was implemented. The incorporation of non-fiction reading throughout the grade levels has been a focal point designed to address the skills needed to excel on the MCA II. This has helped all students who read below grade level, as well as students with an academic history of fiction dominated course work.

Technology is a widely utilized instructional tool that is incorporated throughout this department, in both the required and elective courses. It gives students opportunities to access information beyond the text itself. Technology helps individualize student learning and outcomes. Our use of recent technological advancements such as the Wiki, Ning, and Moodle have allowed and encouraged students to interact, connect and discuss literature with other students from around the globe, regardless of time and space restrictions.

3. **Additional Curriculum Area:**

The district mission statement, "Maximizing Learning Opportunities for All," has led the math department to review the state standards to develop BHS Essential Learner Outcomes (ELO). We placed those ELO (standards) into our class offerings, then developed our curriculum to better deliver the outcomes in an appropriate sequential manner. The goal of having each student reach proficiency in the standards and the course was paramount. We rewrote our exams to effectively assess proficiency of our students and created formative assessments to help us better see which students were struggling, and what they were struggling on before they took the exam. If a student was struggling, they were given required tutoring opportunities during the school day to help them become proficient. One such opportunity is Guided Study Hall, which is offered during their lunch period on a daily basis. A second opportunity, Seminar, is offered as an extra period one day a week. If a student is still not proficient after the exam, we require remedial worksheets (Accelerated Math software) covering the topics that the student did not master and are required to attend the previously mentioned interventions until the students are proficient.

4. **Instructional Methods:**

Our school has the benefit of being on the 4 period (block) schedule. With this comes many benefits. First, we have approximately 87 minutes of class time during each block. This allows us to use a variety of

instructional methods and activities to differentiate our lessons. This schedule allows teachers to move from traditional lecture to a project-based approach and to small or large group activities. A common technique used by teachers is modeled after constructivist education, a teaching approach that requires students to use their prior knowledge to anchor current learning. Utilization of assessment data, including NWEA and MCA II scores, allows teachers to use information about each individual student to better organize the small and large group activities. Groups are designed to place students with peers at the same level or with peers at a varying level depending upon the desired intent. Using the data, teachers can organize groups so that students are placed with classmates with similar histories and/or potential peer tutors. When organized by the latter, struggling students can receive peer tutoring, and successful students are given the opportunity to tutor, which in turn helps their understanding of the content as well. Students who excel in a subject are encouraged to become peer tutors, as well as earn special recognition through our Honors Diploma program. Honors Diploma completion requires students to complete additional challenging curriculum in core and elective areas.

Technology plays a vital role in the school as classrooms are equipped with LCD projectors, VCR/DVD players, and many rooms have Smartboards. The application of these tools has offered multiple ways to help the teacher differentiate instruction. This allows teachers to modify lectures/notes/activities so students with different styles of learning can be engaged. Teachers frequently place notes, examples, and resources on the internet for students and parents to access outside school. The use of web 2.0 resources by teachers increases their ability to reach even more students' styles of learning. Moodle gives teachers the ability to offer a central location for their class to participate in chat rooms, Skyping, Voicethreads, Wikis, posted quizzes, and homework drop boxes.

5. **Professional Development:**

The mission of the Byron Staff Development Program is to provide all district employees with support for their professional growth as guided by district goals.

The staff development program of the Byron Public Schools believes that:

1. Staff development leads to improved student learning.

2. To stay current and effective, all district employees need to be involved in professional development activities throughout their careers.

3. Factors such as trust, open communication and peer support determine the success of professional development programs.

4. Professional and organizational growth requires personal and group commitment to improved performance for students and staff.

5. Growth is a continuous and interdependent process, not an isolated event.

6. Staff development activities should reflect current theory and research in curriculum instruction and assessment.

The Staff Development Program of Byron Public Schools has the following goals and subsequent impact on student learning:

Staff Development Goal 1:	The district will provide opportunities for the staff that will promote curriculum improvements.
Impact on Student Learning:	At Byron High School, weekly seminars were formed to target students' reading and math skills. Based on NWEA and MCA II scores, students that were targeted for special intervention programs showed continued improvement.
Staff Development Goal 2:	The district will provide opportunities for staff to increase their effective use of technology as a learning and teaching tool.
Impact on Student Learning:	With teachers using web sources, students have exposure to multiple sources of information. Student learning is enhanced using the availability of computers to do research, create presentations, and create and edit written reports. SMART boards and hand-held student responders offer interactive learning that increases student participation and engagement.
Staff Development Goal 3:	The district will provide training for staff that will enable them to understand and implement continuous improvement practices and strategies.
Impact on Student Learning:	Students are targeted for special learning opportunities and/or offered continuous support based on data received through Aims-Web and NWEA testing. Proper placement of students leads to a more successful learning environment.
Staff Development Goal 4:	The district will provide training for staff to evaluate educational programs and practices for effectiveness and student academic results.
Impact on Student Learning:	Overall student performance was improved from last year, based on the NWEA and MCA II assessments in the spring of 2009. Byron students' MCA II scores in reading, math, writing, and science were among the highest in southeastern Minnesota. Byron students also scored well on their ACTs.

As a building, our staff development has been concentrating in three primary areas: the development and implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), the development of a tiered response/intervention program for our struggling students and the continued integration of technology into our curriculum/teaching techniques.

We started the implementation of PLCs three years ago. We have brought in speakers to meet with the entire high school staff. We have sent representatives to national conferences led by Dufour and others. The majority of our time and effort has been at our site working with our staff and developing a PLC model that works for us.

The development and design of our response to intervention (RTI) has been one where we have visited other schools and observed, learned and adapted their programs to fit our school. While there are few high schools that are models for RTI, we have studied Adlai Stevenson High School and the writings of Richard Dufour. We have also discussed the work done here in Minnesota by the St. Croix Education District. This staff development project is in its second year and will continue to be a focus for years to come.

The integration of technology into our curriculum has been a focus of our district for a number of years. Our district and our building not only work to put the best equipment in the hands of our staff and students, but also to provide ample opportunities for training and development of technology tools. The primary staff development tool for technology integration is our Professional Growth Academy (PGA). This academy is a week-long "summer school" for teachers and other staff. It is provided for free to the participant, and attendees can earn a stipend for developing a lesson for their students and providing a curriculum guide for

others to use in the future. Many of our teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff and administrators attend a variety of classes each year. Approximately 60-70% of the district's teachers attend and receive 900-1400 hours of professional development. In 2009, 28 BHS staff members (18 BHS teachers, 10 staff) attended and accumulated 476 hours of professional development time. This, coupled with our monthly "just in time" trainings, has helped keep our school and our students leaders in technology.

6. **School Leadership:**

Byron High School is actively involved in Continuous Improvement. Our building CI team is headed by the principal and consists of teacher leaders representing various academic areas. This group reviews the data collected, selects the areas of improvement to work on next, develops proposed goal statements, and presents them to the faculty.

An action plan is developed by the CI team to address how to reach these goals. The CI team then monitors, adjusts, and continues the "plan, do, study, act" process. Each year the CI team sets a goal in each of the following areas:

1) Student performance on the state required math, reading, and writing tests

2) A goal selected from the student and parent satisfaction surveys

3) A goal selected from the teacher and support staff satisfaction surveys

The goals are multi-year, cyclical, and represent an upward spiral approach.

In the 2007-2008 school year, this group selected the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as our umbrella structure. The opening step was to have the staff all read Richard DuFour's book, ***Whatever It Takes***. The principal required that all teachers read and discussed the book. At times the principal used his influence and positional power to ensure a continued, focused, and uniform implementation.

The PLC program, while still in its infancy at BHS, has created concrete improvements. We have added an after school ACT Prep course, an in-school mentoring program, and interventions for all struggling students. These programs have improved student performance as measured by state-mandated testing and various surveys.

The role of the principal has been one to ensure continued implementation of the action plans. He has been responsible for keeping the district's vision (*Maximizing Learning Opportunities for All*) in the forefront of the discussion. He has been responsible for pushing the idea that "good is not good enough," and reiterating that it is not about "how good a job we as teachers did, but how well the students learned."

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 10 Test: MCA-II

Edition/Publication Year: 2009 Publisher: MN Dept. of Education

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	92	78	75	68	90
% Advanced	51	46	44	35	54
Number of students tested	133	116	106	117	111
Percent of total students tested	100	99	96	99	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	1	0	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	1	0	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	70				
% Advanced	20				
Number of students tested	10				
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 11 Test: MCA-II

Edition/Publication Year: 2009 Publisher: MN Dept. of Education

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	60	51	45	30	79
% Advanced	27	23	14	9	26
Number of students tested	107	107	112	107	100
Percent of total students tested	100	98	94	94	92
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0	2	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced		30			
% Advanced		0			
Number of students tested		10			
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes: